



# **DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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**STATEMENT OF PEGGY COOPER CAFRITZ  
PRESIDENT OF THE D.C. BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BEFORE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE  
ON GOVERNMENT REFORM  
FRIDAY, MAY 20, 2005  
REGARDING THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

GOOD MORNING CHAIRMAN DAVIS, CONGRESSWOMAN NORTON  
AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT  
REFORM. I AM PEGGY COOPER CAFRITZ, PRESIDENT OF THE D.C.  
BOARD OF EDUCATION (BOARD). I APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY TO  
SPEAK ON THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS (DCPS).

THE BOARD HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING GOALS TO IMPROVE  
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT:

§ ADOPT THE BEST STATE ACADEMIC STANDARDS THAT WILL ENSURE ALL DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STUDENTS MEET THE HIGHEST EXPECTATIONS FOR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AT EACH GRADE LEVEL. THE BOARD IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT THE CHILDREN OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA BE COMPETITIVE REGIONALLY AND NATIONALLY.

§ ESTABLISH A COMPREHENSIVE DISTRICT-WIDE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES A NEW READING AND MATH PROGRAM, COHERENT CURRICULUM FOR ALL GRADES, UNIFIED AND FOCUSED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW CURRICULUM, REGULAR ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENT PROGRESS, CLOSE MONITORING OF IMPLEMENTATION AND STRONG ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS INCLUDING PERFORMANCE CONTRACTS FOR STAFF.

§ BUILD A WORLD CLASS BUSINESS SYSTEM FOR DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO HELP SUPPORT TEACHING AND LEARNING AND IMPROVE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN OPERATIONS.

§ ADOPT A DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND PARTNER WITH CITY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR ALL DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SCHOOL CHILDREN.

§ ADOPT THE BEST PRACTICES TO ENSURE THAT ALL DC PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WITH MODEL SCHOOL FACILITIES THAT PROMOTE EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING AND MEET NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY.

§ ELIMINATE COURT OVERSIGHT OVER THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS BY ESTABLISHING AND PROVIDING COST EFFECTIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES IN THE FACILITIES OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

WITH THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF MAYOR WILLIAMS, CHAIRMAN CROPP, CITY ADMINISTRATOR ROBERT BOBB AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, THE BOARD HIRED CLIFFORD JANEY AS SUPERINTENDENT. THE BOARD BELIEVES THAT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM HAS HIRED A STRONG AND EXPERIENCED INSTRUCTIONAL

LEADER, WHO WILL MAKE THE NECESSARY SYSTEMIC CHANGES, IMPLEMENT AND BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR RIGOROUS FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, AND BUILD A STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT. THE BOARD IS ALREADY WITNESSING PALPABLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT AND DIRECTION OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM. RECENTLY, THE BOARD APPROVED THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION TO ADOPT NEW ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR LANGUAGE ARTS AND MATHEMATICS FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS, WHICH ARE RECOGNIZED AS THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE AND ACADEMICALLY CHALLENGING IN THE COUNTRY. THESE NEW ACADEMIC STANDARDS FOR EVERY GRADE WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AND INCLUDED IN THE CURRICULUM BY THE FALL.

DR. JANEY RECENTLY PRESENTED HIS STRATEGIC PLAN THAT HAS AS ITS SINGULAR FOCUS – IMPROVED STUDENT LEARNING. IT IS A CULMINATION OF A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT WITH THE D.C. EDUCATION COMPACT, WHOSE MEMBERSHIP CONSISTS OF CITY LEADERS, BUSINESS, PHILANTHROPIC AND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITIES AS WELL AS STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS. BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE

EDUCATION COMPACT, DR. JANEY PREPARED THE STRATEGIC PLAN WHICH WILL SERVE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE MASTER EDUCATION PLAN WHICH WILL BE INTRODUCED IN DECEMBER. THE MASTER EDUCATION PLAN WILL ARTICULATE THE SUPERINTENDENT'S VISION FOR EDUCATION FOR YEARS TO COME. THE PLAN INCLUDES RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING ACADEMIC PROGRAM OFFERINGS, GRADE CONFIGURATIONS, NEIGHBORHOOD OR CLUSTER DELIVERY MODELS, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS THAT WILL ALLOW MORE CHILDREN TO BE EDUCATED IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

THE RECORD IS CLEAR – TOO MANY OF OUR STUDENTS ARE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PERFORMANCE GAP. THE SUPERINTENDENT HAS OUTLINED IN HIS STRATEGIC PLAN A MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRAM TO HELP TURN AROUND LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS – ONE THAT WILL REPLACE THE TRANSFORMATION MODEL AND REACH MORE SCHOOLS WITH ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND RESOURCES. BASED ON A SUCCESSFUL MODEL IN MASSACHUSETTS, THIS PLAN ALIGNS MORE CLOSELY WITH FEDERAL STANDARDS IN “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND.” THIS MODEL PROVIDES PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS WITH TOOLS TO MAKE MORE SYSTEMIC CHANGES. SCHOOLS THAT ARE IN NEED OF

IMPROVEMENT – THOSE FAILING TO MEET ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) TARGETS FOR TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS -- WILL BE SERVED BY ON-SITE SOLUTIONS TEAMS: DISTINGUISHED EDUCATORS, WHO WILL COACH PRINCIPALS; TEACHER SPECIALISTS, WHO WILL COACH TEACHERS IN EACH CONTENT AREA; AND CURRICULUM SPECIALISTS, WHO WILL WORK WITH ALL SCHOOL STAFF. TO ACHIEVE AYP, A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR STATE MUST ACHIEVE THE ACADEMIC TARGETS FOR UP TO 9 GROUPS OF STUDENTS AND TEST 95 PERCENT OF THE STUDENTS WHO WERE ENROLLED FOR A FULL ACADEMIC YEAR.<sup>1</sup> THOSE SCHOOLS FAILING TO MEET ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS FOR FOUR OR MORE CONSECUTIVE YEARS WILL REQUIRE RESTRUCTURING, INCLUDING REPLACEMENT OF STAFF AND OUTSOURCING OF OPERATIONS. DCPS WILL CONTRACT WITH OUTSIDE EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO HELP TURN AROUND THE LOWEST PERFORMING SCHOOLS.

THE BOARD’S REFORM EFFORTS TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT CANNOT SUCCEED IF STUDENTS DO NOT HAVE A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WITH MODEL SCHOOL FACILITIES, WHICH

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<sup>1</sup> THE NINE GROUPS ARE: THE FIVE MAJOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS, DISABLED, LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT/NON ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP/NEP), ELIGIBLE FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS AND TOTAL GROUP

PROMOTE EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND MEET NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY. THE CONDITION OF D.C. SCHOOLS IS A LEGACY OF INHERITED DETERIORATED BUILDINGS FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND THE CONTINUED UNDER FUNDING OF THE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN. THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OPERATES AND MAINTAINS 147 SCHOOLS. THE AVERAGE AGE OF A SCHOOL BUILDING IS 63 YEARS. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS AN ABSENT LANDLORD WHEN IT HAD RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOLS. THE UNFORTUNATE RESULT IS THAT MOST OF THE SCHOOLS ARE NOT BEACONS OF NEIGHBORHOOD PRIDE -- RATHER THEY ARE ISLANDS OF NEGLECT.

THE BOARD RECENTLY APPROVED A PLAN THAT IDENTIFIES 10 SCHOOLS WHERE CHARTER SCHOOLS OR APPROPRIATE D.C. AGENCIES CAN SHARE SPACE. CO-LOCATING WILL EXPLORE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL ACADEMY PROGRAMS AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL, CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO PROVIDE A COMBINATION OF CENTERS AND INCREASED INCLUSION CLASSES SERVING SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN, AND WILL ALLOW OTHER CITY AGENCIES TO PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED HUMAN SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES AROUND THE DISTRICT. THE CO-LOCATION PLAN

ADDRESSES SHORT-TERM OPPORTUNITIES TO USE SPACE AND LEVERAGE FACILITIES DOLLARS THAT THE CHARTER SCHOOLS HAVE AT THEIR DISPOSAL TO OPERATE AND IMPROVE DCPS. THE PLAN PROVIDES A LIMITED OPPORTUNITY TO FIX AND REPAIR BUILDINGS ABOVE AND BEYOND THE FUNDING ALLOWED IN THE CAPITAL BUDGET.

THE BOARD ALSO ADOPTED PROPOSED RULEMAKING FOR PUBLIC/PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS TO HELP WITH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS. THIS EFFORT WILL BE COMPLIMENTED BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN OFFICE SUPERVISED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT, THAT IS DESIGNED TO DEVELOP PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS BY WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY, BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES WHICH ARE INTERESTED IN ASSISTING DCPS IN THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SCHOOLS. A GREAT EXAMPLE IS THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE OYSTER BILINGUAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WHICH ALLOWED DCPS TO BUILD A NEW SCHOOL IN EXCHANGE FOR LAND TO ACCOMMODATE THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS FOR MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND A NEW SCHOOL.



ENROLLMENT IN PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CONTINUES TO GROW. IN SCHOOL YEAR 2004-2005, THE BOARD OF EDUCATION HAS 19 OPERATING CHARTER SCHOOLS ON 23 CAMPUSES, WITH A TOTAL ENROLLMENT OF 3,945 STUDENTS FROM EVERY WARD OF THE CITY. THIS INCLUDES 3 SCHOOLS THAT OPERATE BOTH AN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY PROGRAM. FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2005-2006, THE BOARD WILL OVERSEE 21 CHARTER SCHOOLS ON 26 CAMPUSES.

STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN THE CHARTER SCHOOLS IS IMPROVING. IN SCHOOL YEAR 2004-05, THREE CHARTER SCHOOLS SERVE ONLY SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN AND DO NOT HAVE TO MEET AYP, OF THE REMAINING 16 SCHOOLS THAT ARE REQUIRED TO MEET ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) UNDER THE “NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND” ACT, 10 ACHIEVED AYP IN READING AND NINE (9) ACHIEVED AYP IN MATHEMATICS. SEVEN (7) SCHOOLS ACHIEVED AYP IN BOTH READING AND MATHEMATICS. EVERY SCHOOL THAT DID NOT MEET AYP IN BOTH READING AND MATHEMATICS HAS DEVELOPED IMPROVEMENT PLANS.

DCPS WILL NOT BE HELPING ANYONE BY PUTTING CHARTER SCHOOLS IN DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS. ACCORDING TO THE MARCH

2005 “TRANSITION CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN,” ALMOST HALF (48%) OF D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE IN POOR CONDITION, REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION, 41 PERCENT ARE IN FAIR CONDITION, AND ONLY 11 PERCENT OF D.C. SCHOOLS ARE IN GOOD CONDITION. THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED \$147 MILLION IN FY 2006 AND \$98 MILLION PER YEAR IN FISCAL YEARS 2007-2011 TO FUND THE MASTER FACILITIES PLAN THAT ACTUALLY COSTS \$300 MILLION PER YEAR TO IMPLEMENT – A SHORTFALL OF ALMOST \$1.2 BILLION, WHICH IS THE AMOUNT NEEDED TO FULLY FUND THE MASTER FACILITIES PLAN. THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THE INADEQUACY OF THE FUNDING TO SUPPORT DCPS CAPITAL NEEDS AND PROPOSED SOME ADDITIONAL CAPITAL FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS. THE DISTRICT CANNOT FUND THE ENTIRE AMOUNT NEEDED TO ADEQUATELY ENSURE THAT ALL SCHOOLS MEET EDUCATION, HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS.

HISTORICALLY, FACILITIES MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS AND TECHNOLOGICAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN UNDER FUNDED. THE INDUSTRY STANDARD FOR FACILITY OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE FUNDING IS \$2.20 PER SQUARE FOOT FOR SCHOOL FACILITIES WITH A SUSTAINED MAINTENANCE

PROGRAM. DCPS' FY05 FUNDING WAS \$1.47 PER SQUARE FOOT. THE FY 2006 BUDGET REQUEST INCREASES MAINTENANCE EFFORTS TO \$1.76 PER SQUARE FOOT AND CLOSER IN LINE WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS. HOWEVER, THIS INCREASE WILL BARELY COVER THE BACKLOG OF WORK ORDERS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DETERIORATING CONDITION OF D.C. SCHOOLS.

THE IMMEDIATE NEED TO IMPROVE SCHOOL FACILITIES IS A CRITICAL PRIORITY THAT REQUIRES THE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, CONGRESSIONAL COMMITMENT AND COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN HELP BY PARTNERING WITH THE DISTRICT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GAVE D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS \$6 MILLION FOR LIBRARIES WHICH PROVIDED FOR MUCH NEEDED TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENT, BOOKS, PAINT AND REPAIRS. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ALSO GAVE D.C. PUBLIC SCHOOLS \$4 MILLION FOR 36 NEW PLAYGROUNDS AND RENOVATED 54 PLAYGROUNDS.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN HELP CLOSE THE SCHOOL'S CAPITAL FUNDING GAP BY APPROPRIATING ADDITIONAL DOLLARS TO HELP MEET THE IMMEDIATE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT NEEDS.

THE BOARD LOOKS FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU AS WE CONTINUE TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND PROVIDE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING FOR ALL DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA CHILDREN. THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING ME TO TESTIFY TODAY. I'LL BE HAPPY TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.